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MELANESIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH LANGUAGE GUIDE

FIRST LEVEL

NAVPERS-15,037



MELANESIAN *Gedney* **PIDGIN ENGLISH** **LANGUAGE GUIDE**

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MELANESIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH

HINTS ON PRONOUNCING MELANESIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH

These are a few hints to help you in listening to the Melanesian Pidgin English records which have been supplied to your troop unit. At first Pidgin English may strike you as just plain funny and nothing to take seriously. You must remember that it is a true *language* with its own grammar, vocabulary and special way of saying things. You cannot just mix up English or talk the way you think a Chinese laundryman talks. And remember, learning a few simple phrases of Pidgin and seeing how it works might mean the difference between life and death to you.

Pidgin is spoken in much the same way in New Guinea and through the islands south and east of New Guinea, all the way to New Caledonia. The dialect you are going to hear on the records is the one

used in the eastern part of New Guinea, in New Britain, and through the islands of Bougainville and Buka. The differences that are important in the usage of the Solomons are noted at the end of the "List of Most Useful Words and Phrases."

In general, your pronunciation of words that are the same in English and Pidgin will be understood by the natives. However, you will notice that their pronunciation might sound very strange to you. In general, you will notice the following things:

1. *t*, *d*, *l*, and *r* are often confused, and your ear must be sharp enough to catch the individual native's tricks.
2. *k* and *g* are often interchanged to our ears. Actually, the native is using one sound for both, sometimes sounding to us more like a *k*, sometimes more like a *g*. (Example: *kiss-im* or *giss-im* . . . *ee come* meaning "bring." This is probably from English "git" for "get.")
3. *f* and *p* are often confused to ours ears. Again the native is often giving a sound half-way between *p* and *f* which might sound sometimes more like *g* and sometimes more like *f*. Actually, the sound is like the one you make when you blow out a match. Example: *pella* or *fella*,

from English "fellow," or *pinis* or *finis*,
from English "finish."

4. *ch* and *sh* are often changed to "s." Example: *too mas* from English "too much" and *pinis* from English "finish."
5. *th* often is changed to *d* or *t*. Example: *someting* for English "something."
6. Vowels, generally: *a* as in *sofa* is often put before English words beginning with a consonant. Example: *a-road* for English "road." A vowel sounding like the *y* in *city* is often put between sounds that are pronounced together in English. Example: *si-moke* for English "smoke."

7. In words which have changed greatly from their English equivalents or in writing words taken directly from the native languages, the following system is used:

<i>ah</i> and <i>a</i> equal	the <i>a</i> in <i>father</i>
<i>a</i> equals	the <i>a</i> in <i>sofa</i> (in unaccented syllables).
<i>ai</i> equals	the <i>ai</i> in <i>aisle</i> .
<i>au</i> equals	the <i>ow</i> in <i>cow</i> .
<i>aw</i> equals	the <i>aw</i> in <i>law</i> .
<i>ee</i> equals	the <i>ee</i> in <i>feet</i> .
<i>eh</i> equals	the <i>e</i> in <i>let</i> .
<i>oh</i> equals	the <i>o</i> in <i>go</i> .
<i>u</i> equals	the <i>u</i> in <i>put</i> , except when another pronunciation is noted for it.
<i>uh</i> equals	the <i>u</i> in <i>but</i> .

8. You will notice Pidgin has a peculiar whining sort of intonation. This is quite easy to imitate and very important. Try to memorize the phrases on the records exactly as you hear them, and give this intonation whenever you try to speak Pidgin.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Here is a list of the most useful words and phrases you will need in Melanesian Pidgin English. *You should learn them by heart.* They are the words and phrases included on the Melanesian Pidgin English language records, and appear here in the order they occur on the records.

Greetings and General Phrases

English

*Simplified Melanesian Pidgin
English spelling*

master

master (pronounced MAHS-tuh)

In referring to white women use Mrs; in addressing employed natives use "boy"; in addressing native women use "mary."

Yes

ee-got (from English "he got")
or *na-wuh-name* (English "what name")

or *yes*

No

no-got

or *no*

Understand?	<i>you savvy</i>
I don't understand	<i>uh, me long-long</i>
Speak slowly	<i>you no can talk hurry-up; talk easy (pronounced EE-see)</i>
Where is	<i>where stop</i>
	<i>ee stop where</i>
The government rest house in the village	<i>house kiap (KEE-ahp)</i>
Where is the Government rest house?	<i>where stop house kiap</i>
hotel	<i>house drink</i>
Where is the hotel?	<i>house drink, ee stop where</i>
a toilet	<i>house peck-peck</i>
Where is a toilet?	<i>house peck-peck, ee stop where</i>

The answer to your question "where is such and such" will often be the phrase below accompanied by a gesture.

It's this way or that way *em, ee stop along hap (from English "half")*

If you want directions to a place farther than a short walking distance ask a native to accompany you. For this you use the phrase equal to, "you come and show me the road."

You come and show me the road *You come line-im me along road*

Time

Time is given in terms of the sun's position in the sky, and, as you will see later, distances are given in terms of time.

When did he come?	<i>by'n'by sun, ee stop where; now man, ee come up</i>
When will I get there	<i>by'n'by sun, ee stop where; now, me come up</i>

The native will point to the path of the sun (directly over head for noon, half way between the horizon and the zenith for three o'clock, and so forth) and say:

sun, ee stop allasame

Phrases for Time of Day

An hour before dawn	<i>number one pigeon, ee cry</i>
Dawn	<i>too-light</i>
Noon	<i>bell-o kai-kai</i>
About six o'clock	<i>avvy-noon</i>
Just after sunset	<i>too-dark pinis (English "finish")</i>
Night	<i>big night</i>

You should ask distances in such a way that the answer will be a time of day. For example, if you want to say, "How far is it to Rabaul," you should use the Pidgin for "If I leave here at dawn (noon, six o'clock) when do I get to Rabaul?", you say:

Suppose me loose-im place 'ere along too-light, by'n'by sun, ee stop where now me come up along Rabaul?

Distances can also be guessed from the number of times the verb, (generally "go") is repeated or drawled out.

It's pretty far	<i>man, ee go-go-go-go-go</i>
	or <i>man, ee go-o-o-o-o</i>
It's very far	<i>man, ee go lo-o-o-ng way</i>
	<i>too mas (English "too much")</i>

You need to know the numbers. One to ten are the same as the English, but always add "pella" (English "fellow"). For instance:

One man has two wives	<i>one pella man, ee got two pella mary</i>
------------------------------	---

Numbers

eleven	<i>one pella ten one</i>
twelve	<i>one pella ten two</i>
twenty	<i>two pella ten</i>
one hundred	<i>ten pella ten</i>
one thousand	<i>plenty too mas</i>

When you want to know what something is or what it's for, you say:

wuh-name (English "what name") *someting 'ere*
or *dis pella someting belong wuh-name*

Designation

I want	<i>me like</i>
I want to eat	<i>me like kai-kai</i>
I want to drink	<i>me like drink</i>
Bring it	<i>kiss-im, ee come</i>
I want some firewood	<i>kiss-im some pella pire-wood, ee come</i>

Foods

milk	<i>soo-soo</i>
a young cocoanut to drink	<i>koo-lau</i>
a ripe banana	<i>mau (also means "ripe")</i>
a ripe papaya	<i>paw-paw, ee mau</i>
pineapple	<i>na-nas</i>
limes, lemons, etc.	<i>moo-lee</i>

eggs	<i>kee-au</i>
chicken	<i>kahk-a-rook</i>
beef	<i>bull-a-ma-cow</i> (<i>put the accent on "cow"</i>)
vegetables	<i>sah-yoo</i>
foods like potatoes	<i>tah-roh</i>
	<i>mammy</i>
	<i>yams</i>
	<i>kau-kau</i>
native tobacco	<i>brus</i> ("u" as in "put")
drinking water	<i>water belong drink</i>
water for washing	<i>water belong wash-wash</i>

When you want to buy something in a shop or store you say:

me like buy-im some pella

Then add the name of the thing wanted

To find out how much things cost, you say:

By'n'by me buy-im long

how mas mark

The answer will be given you in "marks," an Australian shilling, worth about 25 cents.

If you think the price is too high, you can say:

Dis pella someting, ee no eenup
(English "enough") along two
pella (three pella, ten pella,
etc.) mark

Time

yesterday	<i>assady</i>
today	<i>now</i>

something that will happen today	<i>by'n'by now</i>
something that has happened today	<i>now tas all (English, "that's all")</i>
tomorrow	<i>tomorrow</i>
day after tomorrow	<i>hap tomorrow</i>
day before yesterday	<i>assaday before</i>

The days of the week are: Sunday, one-day, two-day, three-day, etc.

The word for week is Sunday.

Useful Phrases

What is your name?	<i>call-im name belong you</i>
What is the Pidgin for this —	<i>Dis pella someting, white-man ee call-im wuh-name</i>
That's all right, or Never mind	<i>mahs-kee</i>

In order to get an idea of how Pidgin sounds, listen to the following passage. A white man is asking a native boy what happened to a native whom he and his friend saw fighting the day before.

"Assaday" me go along place, one time along ('with') pe-rehn (English 'friend') belong me. Allright, me two pella look-im two pella kanaka ('natives') ee pight. Allright now one pella, ee kiss-im hap dee-wigh (English 'half-tree', hence 'club' or 'stick') pight him dis nudder pella man, ee die; tas all ee no ee die pinis. Allright, all-ee carry man, ee go. All-ee pass-im

(‘bandaged’) head belong-im along dis pella house. Now, allasame wuh-name? Dis pella man ee pight-im em, ee no ee stop?”

“Yes, master ee no ee stop, ee run away pinis.”

We will now take the passage sentence by sentence. Repeat in Pidgin English each time.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Yesterday I went to the village | <i>“Assaday me go along place</i> |
| 2. With my friend. | <i>one time along (‘with’) pe-rehn</i>
<i>(English ‘friend’) belong me.</i> |
| 3. We saw two natives fighting | <i>Allright, me two pella (we)</i>
<i>look-im two pella kanaka</i>
<i>(‘natives’) ee pight</i> |
| 4. One of them took a piece of wood | <i>Allright now one pella, ee kiss-im</i>
<i>hap dee-wigh, (English ‘half-</i>
<i>tree’)</i> |
| 5. And knocked the other one out, but didn’t kill him. | <i>pight him dis nudder pella man,</i>
<i>ee die; tas all ee no ee die</i>
<i>pinis.</i> |
| 6. They picked the man up | <i>Allright all-ee carry man, ee go.</i> |
| 7. They bandaged his head in this house. | <i>All-ee pass-im (‘bandaged’) head</i>
<i>belong-im along dis pella</i>
<i>house.</i> |
| 8. What I want to know is: | <i>Now, allasame wuh-name</i> |
| 9. Isn’t the man who hit the other fellow here? | <i>Dis pella man ee pight-im em, ee</i>
<i>no ee stop?</i> |

10. No, master, he's not here. *Yes, master, ee no ee stop*

11. He has run away. *ee run away pinis."*

For most of the Solomon Islands, note the following variations:

1. "I don't understand"—you will hear instead of "me long-long," "me no harim (English hear) good," or "me no harim savvy."

2. When did he come?—"em ee can come up long wuh-name time?"

3. When will I get there?—"me can come up long wuh-name time?"

4. In addition to "brus," the word "tambak" for native tobacco is frequently heard.

5. In most of the Solomons, instead of *dee-wigh* for "tree," the straight English "tree" or "te-ree" is most commonly used.

ADDITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES

Natural Objects

bank	<i>ah-ra-reh</i>
darkness	<i>too-dark</i>
daytime	<i>long-sun</i>
garden	<i>wuhk (English "work")</i>
fire	<i>pire (English "fire")</i>
forest or jungle	<i>bush</i>
grass	<i>grass</i>
ground	<i>gi-roun (English "ground")</i>

hill
lake

swamp
moon
mountain
sea

rain
river
star
stream
sun
wind

liklik mountain
*roun water (English "round
water")*
gi-roun ee no strong
moon
smountain
*wawl water (English "salt
water") or soda water*
rain or a rain
water
si-tar (English "star")
barik or barat or barad
sun
win (English "wind")

Time

day
month
morning
night
year

day
moon
morning time
big night
Christmas

Relationships

boy
brother
child
daughter

monkey
brudder or ba-rudder
pickaninny
pickaninny mary

father
girl
man
mother
sister
son
woman or wife
grandparent
relations-in-law

papa
monkey mary or liklik mary
man
mama
sisser
pickaninny man
mary
tumboona
tahmboo

Human Body

arms
back
body
eye
ear
finger
foot
hair
hand

head
leg
mouth
nose
teeth
toe
joint

ahn
back side
si-kin (English, "skin")
eye
ear
pinger
leg
grasi belong head
ahn (English "arm")
or han (English "hand")
head
leg
mout
nose (pronounced nohs)
teet
finger belong leg
si-crew (English "screw")

House and Furniture

bed	<i>bed</i>
blanket	<i>ba-lanket</i>
chair	<i>chair</i>
cup	<i>cup</i>
door	<i>door</i>
house	<i>house</i>
kitchen	<i>house cook</i>
stairs	<i>ladder</i>
table	<i>table</i>
wall	<i>banis</i>
window	<i>window</i>
mosquito net	<i>taw-nam (particularly in Rabaul area)</i>

Food and Drink—Tobacco

cocoanut	<i>coconuhs</i>
ripe cocoanuts	<i>dry coconuhs</i>
food	<i>kai-kai</i>
cigarette	<i>cigar or smoke</i>
bananas	<i>banana</i>
fruit	<i>pickaninny belong dee-wigh (English "tree")</i>
cucumbers	<i>kam-bang</i>
salt	<i>swawl (English "salt")</i>
fish	<i>piss</i>
sugar or sugar cane	<i>sukar</i>
coffee	<i>kawpee</i>

meat
jam
ice
mango
shrimp
crab
rice
pipe
pepper
clams, mussels, oysters
tea
steak
tomatoes
whiskey
beer
betel nut

meat
jam
ice
mahngo
kindam
koo-pa
rice
pipe
kee-na
kee-na
tea
meat
tomabtoes (rare)
whiskey
beer
pilly nuhs

Surroundings

bridge, jetty or wharf
church
city
market
native men's house
dwelling house
path
post office
police station
store
street

bridge
house loh-too
town
boom or boong
house tambran
house married
road or a-road
house post
house police
si-tore (English "store")
road

cinema
town
village

picture
town
place belong ka-na-ka

Animals

bird
pigeon
chicken
cassowary
crocodile
dog
goat
horse
flies
mouse or rat
ants
pig
shark
sheep
snake
insect
small kangaroo
leech
lice
duck
bedbugs
cat
spider
cow

pigeon
ba-lus
poul (English "fowl")
mao-rook
puk-puk ("u" as in "put")
dog
may
waws or hors-ee
lahng or gnat-gnat
rat
anis
pig
shark
sheep-sheep
si-nake
bin-a-tan
see-kou
liklik si-nake
nit-nit
pa-to
nus-nus
pussy
dum-dum ("u" as in "but")
*bull-a-ma-cow (put the accent on
"cow")*

Trades and Occupations

cook	<i>cook</i>
government representa- tive	<i>lu-lu-igh</i> or <i>number one</i> (for the whole area) or <i>ku-ku-righ</i> (for a village)

Numbers

first	<i>number one and so on</i>
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Clothing

belt	<i>led</i>
boots	<i>soo</i> (English "shoe")
coat	<i>coat</i>
hat	<i>hat</i>
necktie	<i>tie</i>
cloth	<i>lap-lap</i>
(outer) shorts	<i>short fella trousers</i>
shirt	<i>shirt</i>
socks	<i>sock or leg</i>
sweater	<i>sweater</i>
trousers	<i>trousers</i>
undershirt	<i>singlis</i>

Adjectives

good	<i>good-fella</i>
bad	<i>no good</i>
big	<i>big-fella</i>

small		<i>lik-lik or lik-a-lik (lik-i-lik in area around Rabaul)</i>
right		<i>shoot</i>
left		<i>links</i>
	or	<i>kas</i>
	or	<i>arm no good</i>
sick		<i>sick</i>
well		<i>all right or stop nothing</i>
hungry		<i>hungry</i>
thirsty		<i>hungry long water</i>
black		<i>black-fella</i>
white		<i>white-fella</i>
red		<i>red-fella</i>
blue		<i>black-fella</i>
green		<i>black-fella or allasame leaf</i>
yellow		<i>yellow or white-fellow-liklik</i>
high		<i>too-mas (English "too much")</i>
low		<i>ee down</i>
long		<i>long fella</i>
short		<i>short fella</i>
deep		<i>ee down too mas</i>
shallow		<i>ee no go down</i>
cold		<i>col</i>
hot		<i>hot-fella</i>
wet		<i>ee got water</i>
dry		<i>dry-fella</i>
dirty		<i>ee got dirty</i>
clean		<i>clean-fella</i>
expensive		<i>dear too mas</i>
cheap		<i>ee no dear</i>

empty	<i>noting (English "nothing" This follows noun)</i>
old	<i>old-fella (things)</i>
	<i>la-poon (people)</i>
new	<i>new-fella</i>
young	<i>young-fella</i>
full	<i>full-up</i>
ready	<i>ready finis or a-ready finis</i>

Pronouns

I	<i>me</i>
we	<i>me-fella (often does not include the person you are talking to)</i>
we	<i>you-me (includes person you are talking to) me-two-fellow (when only two people are speaking)</i>
you (singular)	<i>you</i>
you	<i>you-two-fella (talking to two people)</i>
you (plural)	<i>you-fellow</i>
he	<i>em</i>
she	<i>em</i>
my, mine	<i>belong me</i>
yours	<i>belong you</i>
	<i>or belong you-all</i>
theirs	<i>belongs all</i>
his	<i>belong em</i>
our	<i>belong me-fella</i>

they	<i>all</i>
this or that	<i>this-fella</i>
these or those	<i>this-fella all-a man</i>
which?	<i>wuh-name?</i>
who?	<i>hoosat? ("who's that")</i>
how?	<i>all-a-same wuh-name?</i>
how many?	<i>how mas? (English "much")</i>
who, which or that (relative pronouns)	<i>ee</i>
anyone	<i>one-fellow</i>
everybody	<i>altogether man</i>
all	<i>altogether</i>

Prepositions

of, from	<i>belong</i>
to, in	<i>long or along</i>
with	<i>one time along</i>
near	<i>close to</i>
in front	<i>along eye belong</i>

Adverbs

about	<i>on top</i>
again	<i>'gain</i>
behind or after	<i>behind</i>
below	<i>underna</i>
far	<i>long way</i>
here	<i>'ere</i>

as much as
less than
more
enough
already

a little
bigger, etc.
near
on that side
on this side
there (pointing)
very

where

ee-nup along
en no ee-nup along
more
enup
finis (English "finish", pronounced "pinis" in Rabaul Area)
liklik
bit-fella more
close to
along hap ee go
along hap ee come
along this-fella hap
more or too mas (follows the adjective)
where stop

Conjunctions

and
for
but
if
yet
still not

now (often pronounced "nuh")
belong
tas all ("that's all")
suppose
yet
enoh yet

Phrases for Every Day

Come here
Come quickly

you come
you come hurry-up

**Go quickly
What do you want?**

Bring some drinking water

**Bring some food
Where is the village?**

**I am hungry
I am thirsty
Where are you going?
I'm going for a walk
Be careful! or Look out!
Wait a minute**

or

Where can I sleep

**I haven't any money, I
have only cigarettes
I am sick**

**I am an American soldier,
I am your friend**

*Run you go
You look-out-im wuh-name
something?
Kiss-im water belong drink ee
come
Bring-im kai-kai ee come
Where stop place belong ka-na-
ka?
Me hungry
Me hungry along water
You go where?
Me lim-lim-boor
Look out
Wait past time
Sun up past time
Me can sleep long wuh-name
place?
Me no got money, si-moke tasall
Me got sick (point to the part of
the body affected).
Me man belong 'Merica, me pe-
rehn belong you*



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